



FLOWER

LEGENDS

FOR

CHILDREN

TOLD BY

HILDA MURRAY

PICTURED BY

J. S. ELAND

LONGMANS, GREEN, & Co.

OF

LONDON, NEW YORK, & BOMBAY





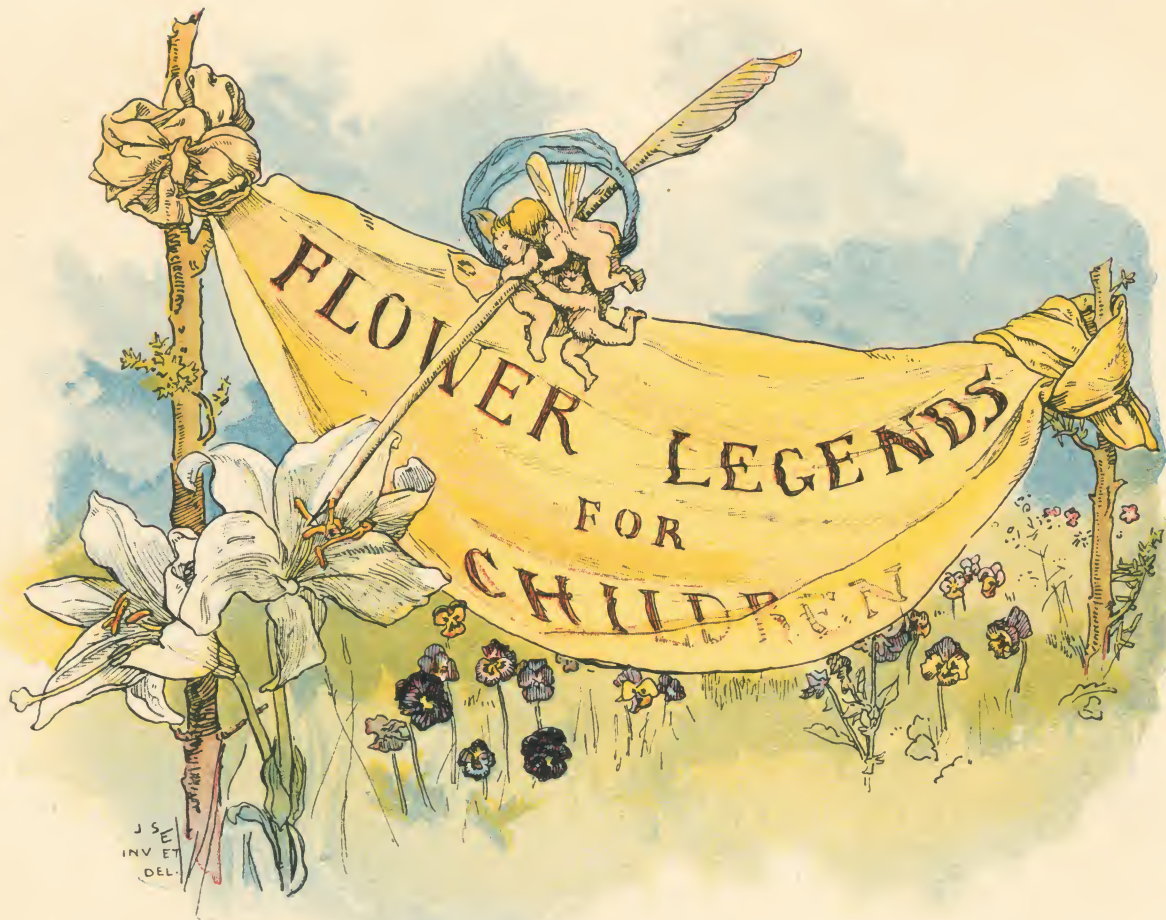








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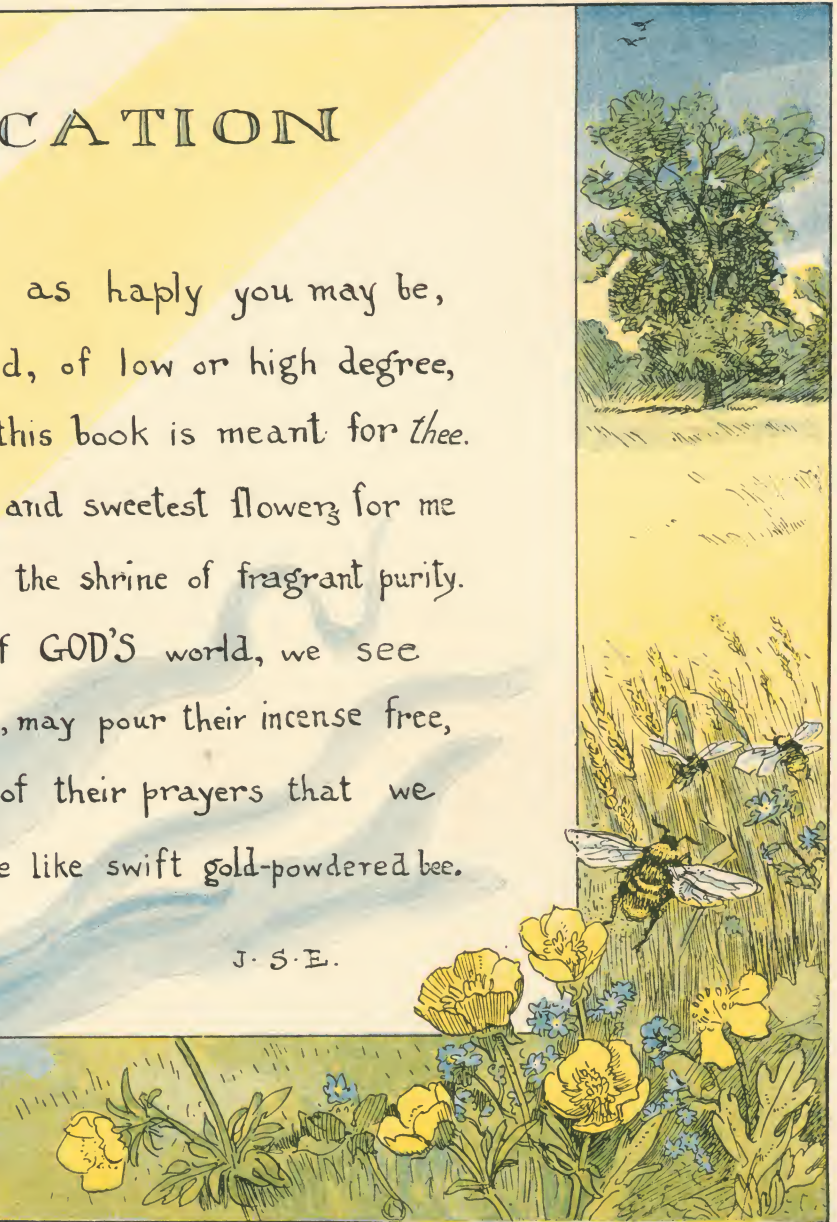
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## DEDICATION

Fair, or less fair, dear Child, as haply you may be,  
Fashioned or straight or crooked, of low or high degree,  
So be thou kind and good, this book is meant for thee.  
For, of all blooms, the best and sweetest flowers for me  
Are those whose beauty's but the shrine of fragrant purity.  
And, in the perfumed garden of GOD'S world, we see  
That children, too, like flowers, may pour their incense free,  
Swinging the smoking censers of their prayers that we  
May homeward rise to heaven's hive like swift gold-powdered bee.

J. S. E.









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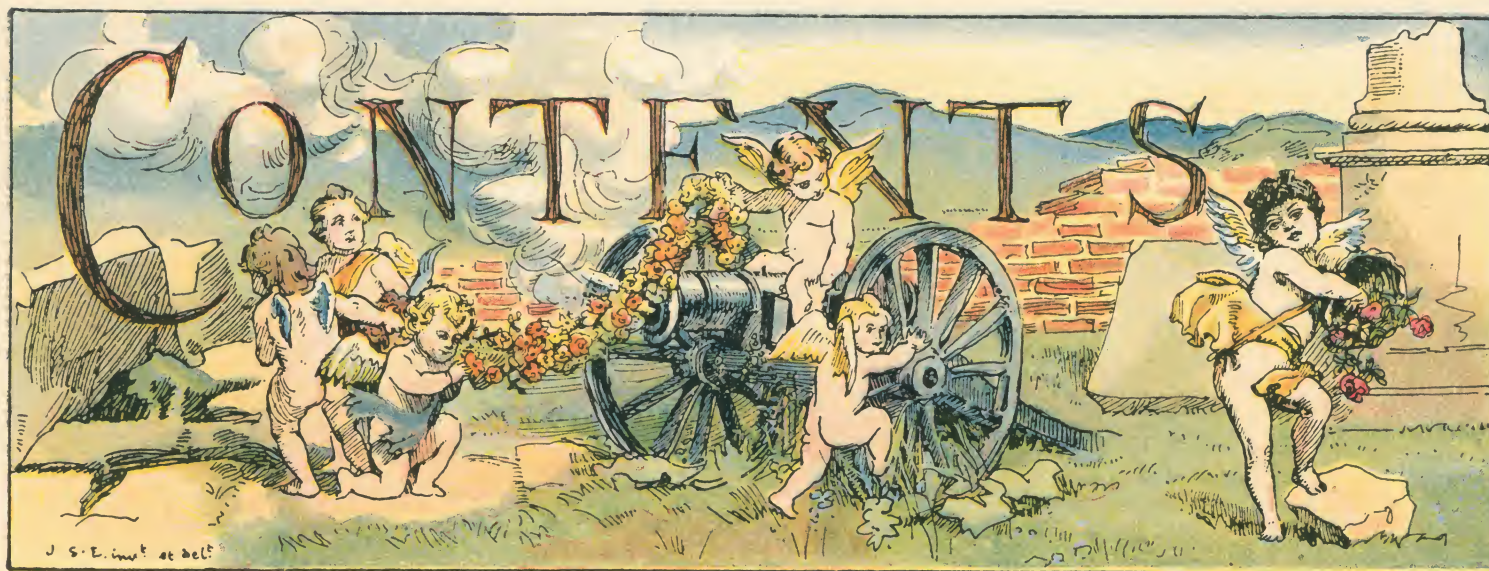
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CHILD !

To your little rose-shell : ear  
Hold the tender flowers near.  
Listen, then, and they will tell  
How they live in fairy dell :  
They will kiss your gentle hand,  
And tell you tales of Flower-land !













## THE MOSS ROSE.

ONCE upon a time, says the old legend, the angel whose work on earth was to guard the flowers, lay down one night to sleep under a rose tree. With gentle whisperings she lulled him to rest, and through the star-lit night waved perfumed branches over his head.

Day broke over the shadowy, mist-clad valley, and bars of orange-scarlet light touched the distant eastern peaks into gold. In the sky above was the morning star, and the crescent moon hung over all.

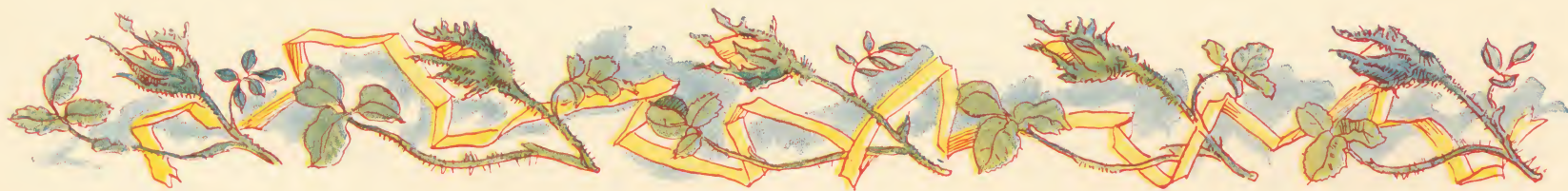
When he awoke, refreshed, the angel asked the rose what he could give her as a reward for the shelter she had given him, and for the sweet sleep he had





enjoyed beneath her scented flowers. The rose blushed, and, looking more lovely still, made request that something might be added to her beauty.

The angel thought for a moment, wondering if it were possible to make her more lovely than she already was; and then he threw about her a veil of transparent fresh green moss, to protect her from the cold winds and rain, and from that day the moss rose has worn the angel's gift.













# THE TULIP.



ONCE upon a time, there was an old woman who lived in a cottage set in the midst of a pretty garden, and in the garden was a bed of beautiful tulips.

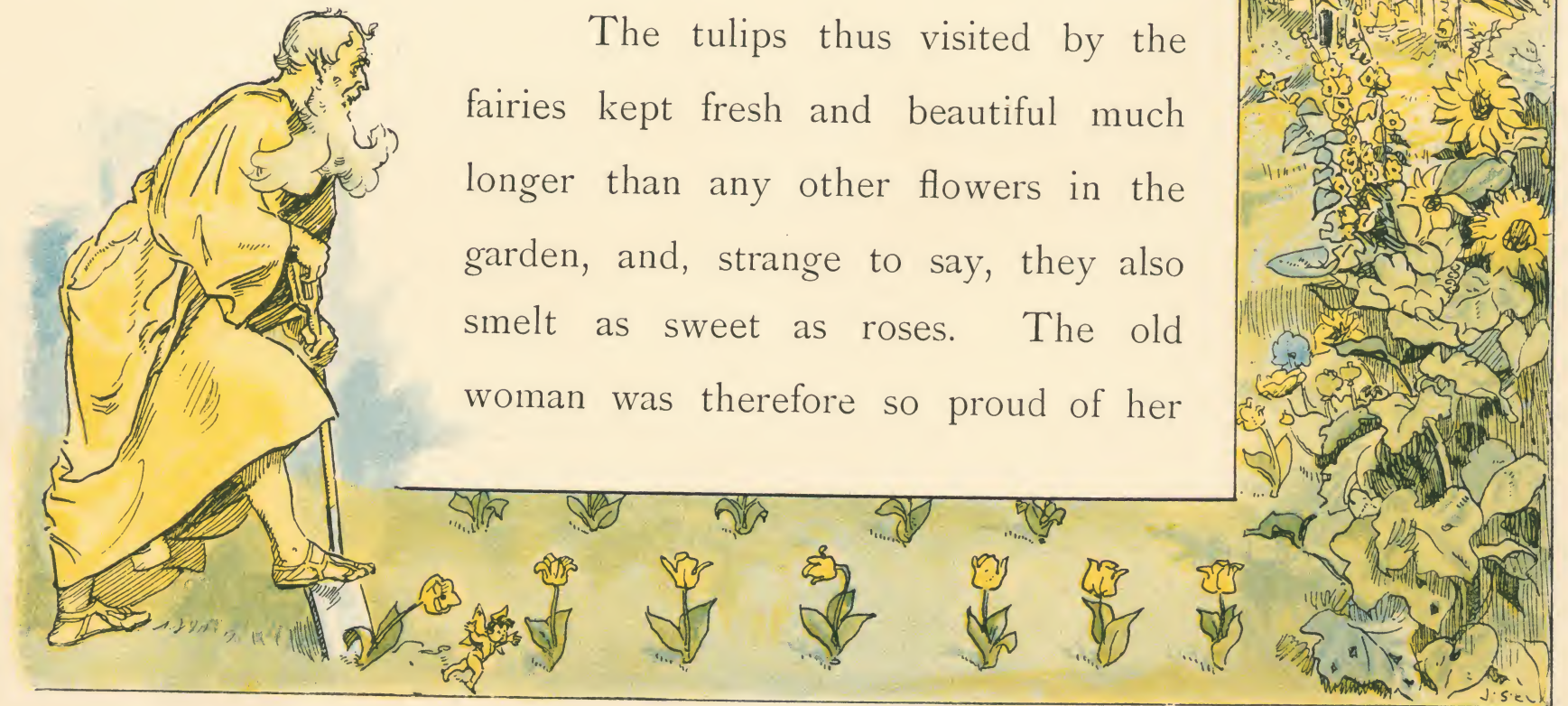
Fairies and pixies are very fond of these flowers; and every night they brought their babies to put them to sleep under the tulips in the old woman's garden, and the tulips sang and rocked the little pixies to sleep.





As soon as the babies were asleep the fairy mothers and fathers would return to the fields, and there dance in moon-lit rings all night. When morning came they returned to the tulips to wake their little ones with gentle kisses.

The tulips thus visited by the fairies kept fresh and beautiful much longer than any other flowers in the garden, and, strange to say, they also smelt as sweet as roses. The old woman was therefore so proud of her





tulips that she never allowed anyone to touch them.  
One sad day, the old woman died, and an unkind man  
came to live in her cottage, who did not  
love flowers. He tore them all up,  
and planted a parsley bed instead;  
but he was well punished,  
for the fairies were so angry





at the way he had treated their tulips that every night they danced and trampled on the parsley, so that it withered away. Indeed, they allowed nothing to grow in that garden for a long time.

The fairies, however, took great care of the grave where the old woman was buried, and mosses and grasses grew on it, and sweet wild flowers; and that was how they showed their gratitude to the old woman for keeping lovely tulips as cradles for their babies.





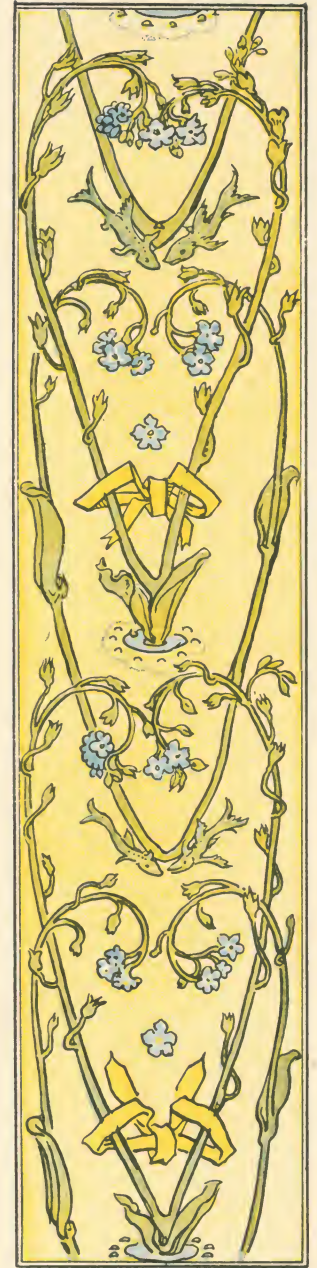




## THE FORGET-ME-NOT.

A LONG time ago a knight and his lady were walking by the banks of a river, when suddenly they saw a spray of little blue flowers floating on the water not far from the bank, and it seemed as if they would soon be swept away by the quick-running stream.

The knight, loving well his lady, and thinking it would please her if he saved the flowers for her, jumped into the river and grasped them; but, alas, the current was too strong for him: and as he was swept past the poor lady, who was wringing her hands at the sight of her drowning knight, he threw the flowers at her feet, calling out "Forget-me-not," and the little blue flowers have been called by that name to this day.





There is another story connected in legend with the Forget-me-not, and it is this:—

When Adam and Eve were in the Garden of Eden, it is said, Adam gave all the flowers their names, and told them to be sure and remember what he called them.

One little flower, however, was careless and forgot its name. The next time Adam passed it in the Garden, in order to see if he was as short of memory as itself, the little flower called out to him: “By what name dost thou call me?” “Forget-me-not,” was Adam’s reply.







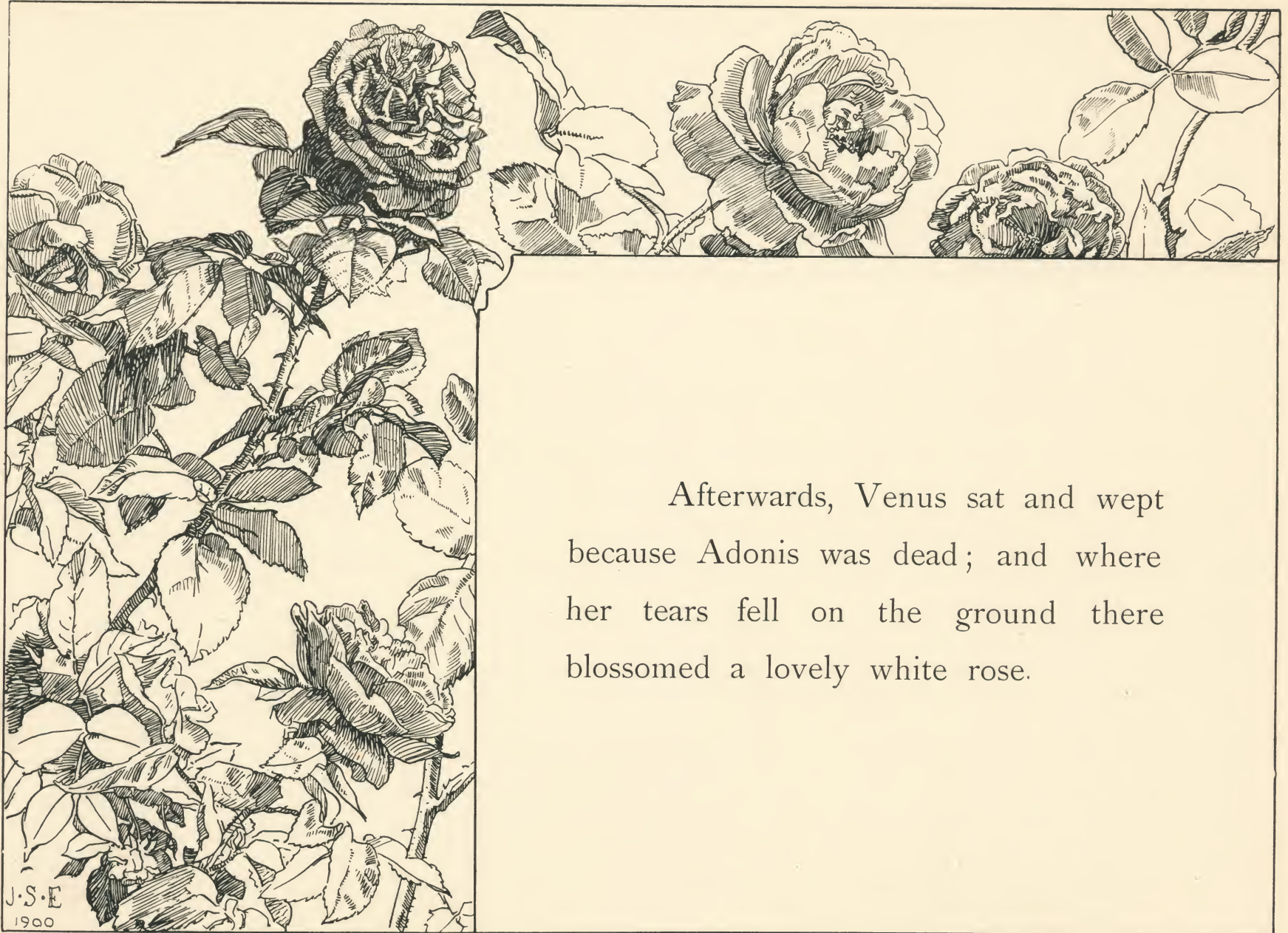


## ROSES RED AND WHITE.

THERE was once a beautiful goddess called Venus, and she loved the handsome young god Adonis. Poor Adonis died from the wound of a wild boar he was hunting, and, when Venus heard of this, she ran grief-stricken through the woods in despair, to look for and aid her beloved Adonis.

As she was running along, her foot was pricked by a thorn, and the blood that flowed from the wound suddenly sprang up into a beautiful red rose.





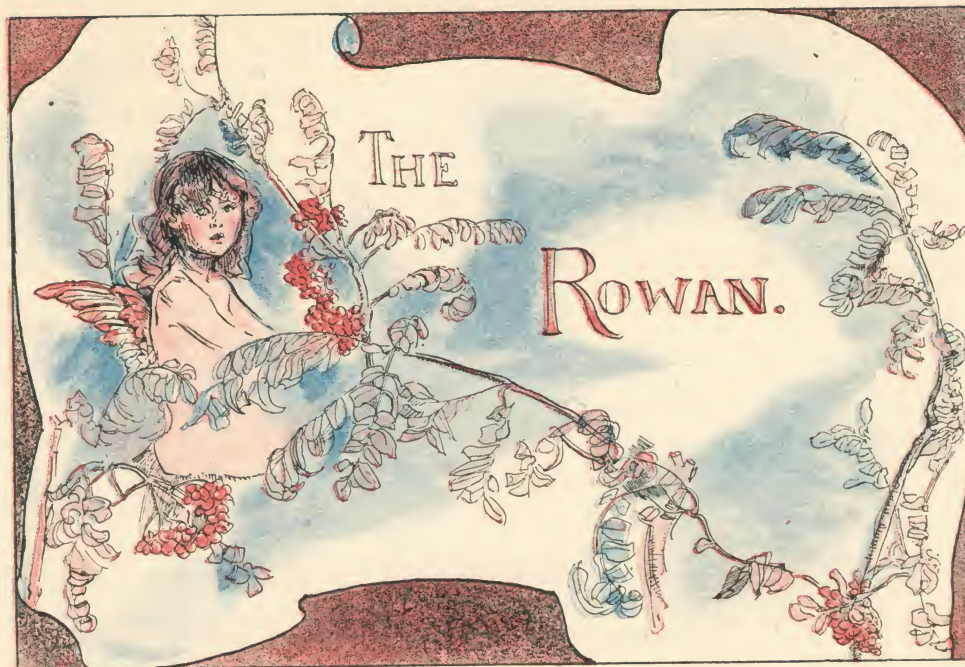
Afterwards, Venus sat and wept  
because Adonis was dead; and where  
her tears fell on the ground there  
blossomed a lovely white rose.











ALL the fairies and pixies are very fond of this tree, with its beautiful scarlet berries, and people say the good fairies take special care of the children who carry a few of the berries in their pockets.

In Scotland, rowan trees are often planted near the cottages and cow-stables, and then it is supposed no wicked sprites or elves can harm those who live in them.

There is a legend in Norway about this tree that the great god, called Thor, one day was crossing a deep river, and looking for a stick to help him across, when he saw a rowan. He pulled it up and took it as a staff, and after that it was called Thor's helper.





## FLEUR - DE - LYS.



ANY hundred years ago, there was a king of France named Clovis, whose coat-of-arms was three black toads. But, one night, an old hermit saw a most wonderful vision in his cell. An angel appeared to him, holding a shield of great beauty.

Its colour was the blue of the sky, and on it were emblazoned three golden lilies. The hermit was told to give it to the wife of Clovis, Queen Clotilde;

this he did, and Clovis took the three lilies as the emblem of France, instead of the three black toads. From the day he did so his armies were everywhere victorious.











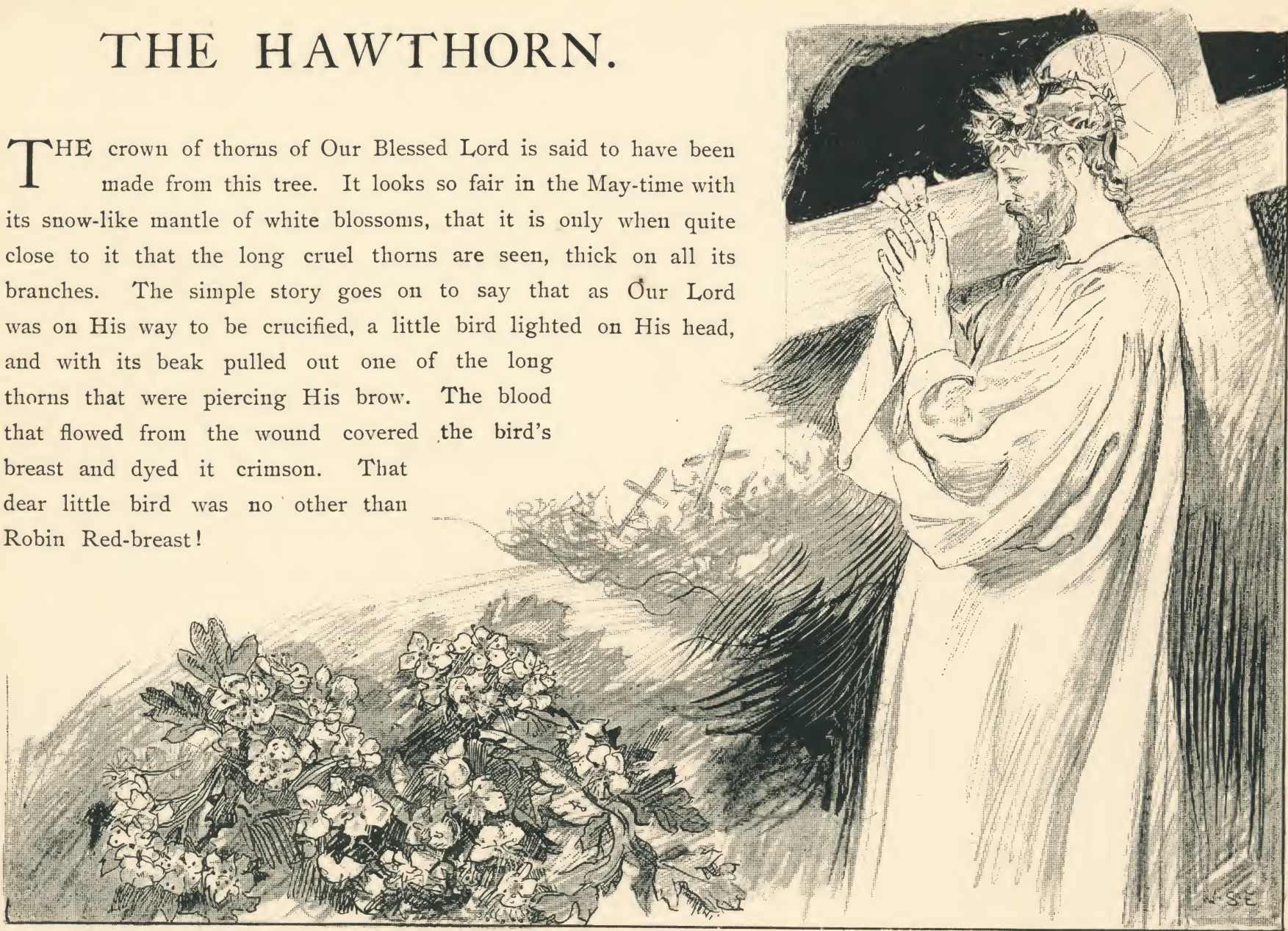
## THE ASPEN.

THIS is a tree which has the peculiarity that its pale green leaves are never still for a moment, but are always quivering and trembling. The reason of this is a very sad one, and explains why the Aspen can never be at rest. We are told that the Cross of Our Blessed Lord was made of the wood of the Aspen, and that the poor tree was so terribly grieved to be used for such a purpose that it has trembled ever since.



# THE HAWTHORN.

THE crown of thorns of Our Blessed Lord is said to have been made from this tree. It looks so fair in the May-time with its snow-like mantle of white blossoms, that it is only when quite close to it that the long cruel thorns are seen, thick on all its branches. The simple story goes on to say that as Our Lord was on His way to be crucified, a little bird lighted on His head, and with its beak pulled out one of the long thorns that were piercing His brow. The blood that flowed from the wound covered the bird's breast and dyed it crimson. That dear little bird was no other than Robin Red-breast!













THERE is a charming story about the almond tree in Grecian history. A young Greek, called Demophoon, was on his way home from the siege of Troy; but as the ship passed the shores of Thrace, there was a great storm, and he was shipwrecked.

Now the King of Thrace had a beautiful daughter, named Phyllis, who received Demophoon with kindness, and he fell in love with her, and she promised to marry him.

Before the wedding Demophoon said he must go to his country to get his palace ready for his beautiful princess.



Away he went in another ship, and the princess was quite happy at first as Demophoon had promised to return very soon, but time went on and he never came. The princess watched and waited, but in vain; and, in course of time, as Demophoon never returned, she became very thin and ill, and, at last, she died.

Then because she had been so faithful and constant to the unworthy Demophoon the fairies changed her into a beautiful almond tree.











DAPHNE was a young Greek goddess, and Apollo, the god of the sun, fell desperately in love with her. But, charming as Apollo was, Daphne did not like him, and whenever she saw him she ran away.

One day she was flying through the woods to escape from Apollo, and, terrified lest he should overtake her, she implored the water gods to change her



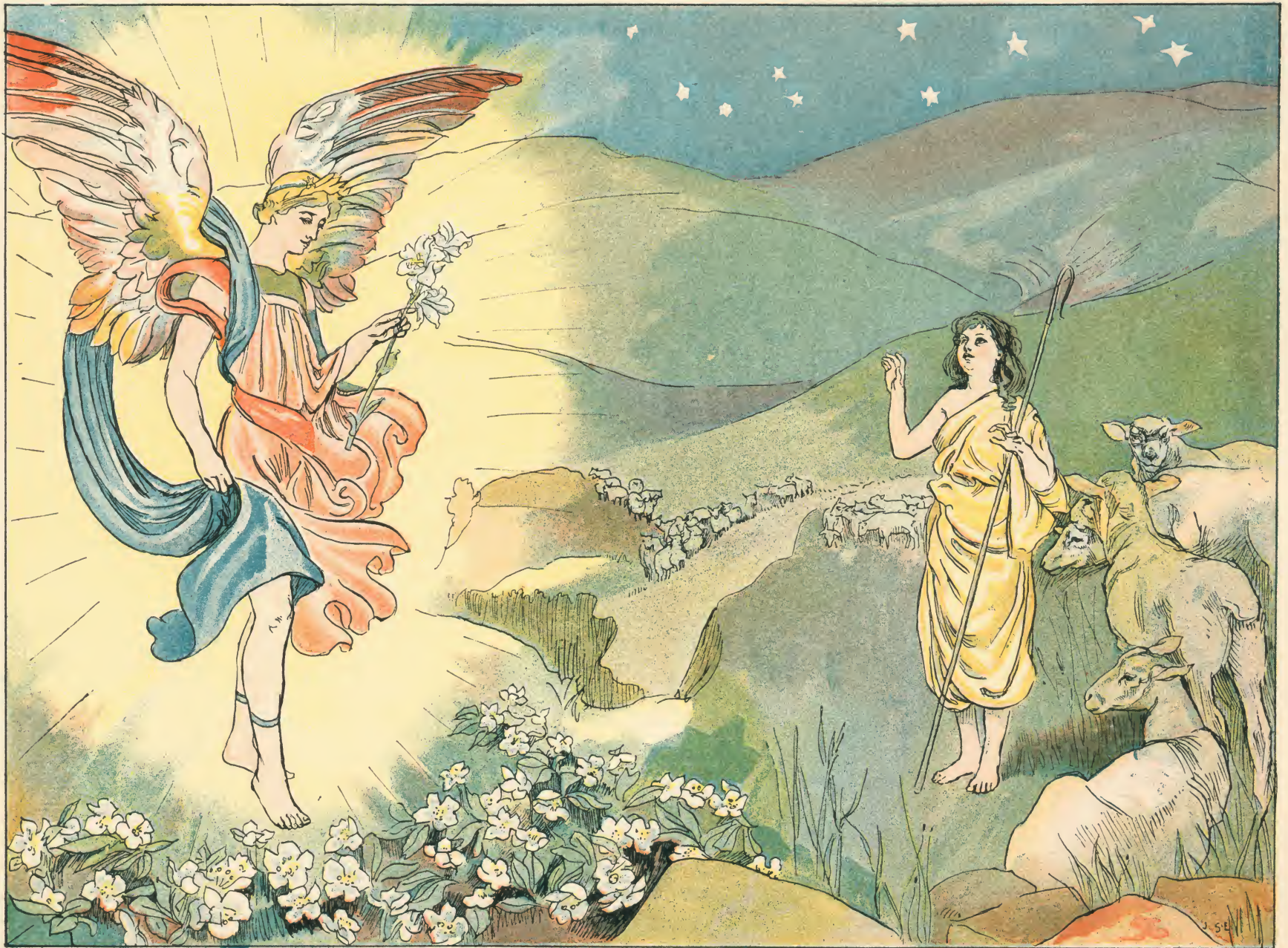
form. No sooner had she expressed this wish, than her feet became fastened to the ground, and lengthened themselves into roots, her hair turned into leaves, and her arms to boughs, so that when Apollo came to where he had last seen her running from him, he found instead a beautiful laurel tree.

Then Apollo declared that as she was no longer Daphne, and, therefore, could not be his love, as a laurel she should be his tree, and that a crown of her leaves should be the reward of the highest honour and fame.

Apollo further declared that her boughs should never be bare in winter-time, but should always be clothed with glistening emerald leaves.











AMONG the shepherds who watched their flocks on the first Christmas night, was a little maiden, and when she saw the bright star in the East, and the Wise Men on their way to Bethlehem, she followed them to see whither they went. She saw these old men go down on bended knee before the Babe lying in His manger cradle, and bring out rare and beautiful gifts to lay before Him. Then the little maid's heart yearned towards the Babe, and she too longed to lay some offering before Him, but she was poor and had neither gold nor silver with which to buy gifts. So she turned sadly away, and went back to guard her sheep. Suddenly she saw a bright light, and in the midst of the light an angel stood, whose





raiment shone like glittering snow, and whose face was so fair and gentle that the little maid knew no fear.

“The angel spoke, his voice was low and sweet  
As the sea’s murmur on low-lying shore,  
Or whisper of the wind in ripened wheat;”

and he asked the maiden why she looked so downcast. She told him of her wish, and how she had nothing to give the Holy Child. Without a word, the angel touched the ground with the branch of waving lilies he held in his hand, and immediately the field was white with lovely flowers. The little maid at once gathered many of them, and, running back to the stable, laid them very near the Babe, who smiled at her and stretched out His tiny hands to the flowers. Then the little shepherdess’s heart was glad, and she returned this time to her flocks full of joy, and thanking God that He had given her her heart’s desire. And the angel’s flowers were the Christmas Roses.











## THE POPLAR TREE.

ONCE upon a time, Jupiter had some beautiful silver spoons stolen from him. Knowing that one of the trees of the forest was the thief, he called Ganymede, his cupbearer, and told him to go and find out which tree had done this wrong thing, so that he might recover the spoons and punish the thief.

Off went Ganymede into the forest, and first he went to the oak: "My lord Jupiter's silver spoons have been stolen, and one of the trees of the forest has taken them. I have come to find the spoons and the thief; Oak, do you know anything of this matter?" But the oak shook all his great branches and his breath roared through them with rage. Said he: "I am king of the trees, and have thousands of golden cups and emerald plates; why should I be accused of stealing common silver spoons? I have never even heard of them."

So Ganymede bowed low, made his apology, and passed on. Next he went to a lovely birch, and of her he asked the same question; but the birch drew herself up haughtily and answered: "I have silver enough of my own without stealing other people's. I know nothing about my lord Jupiter's spoons." Again Ganymede bowed low, asking the lady of the forest to pardon him, and went on to the other trees.



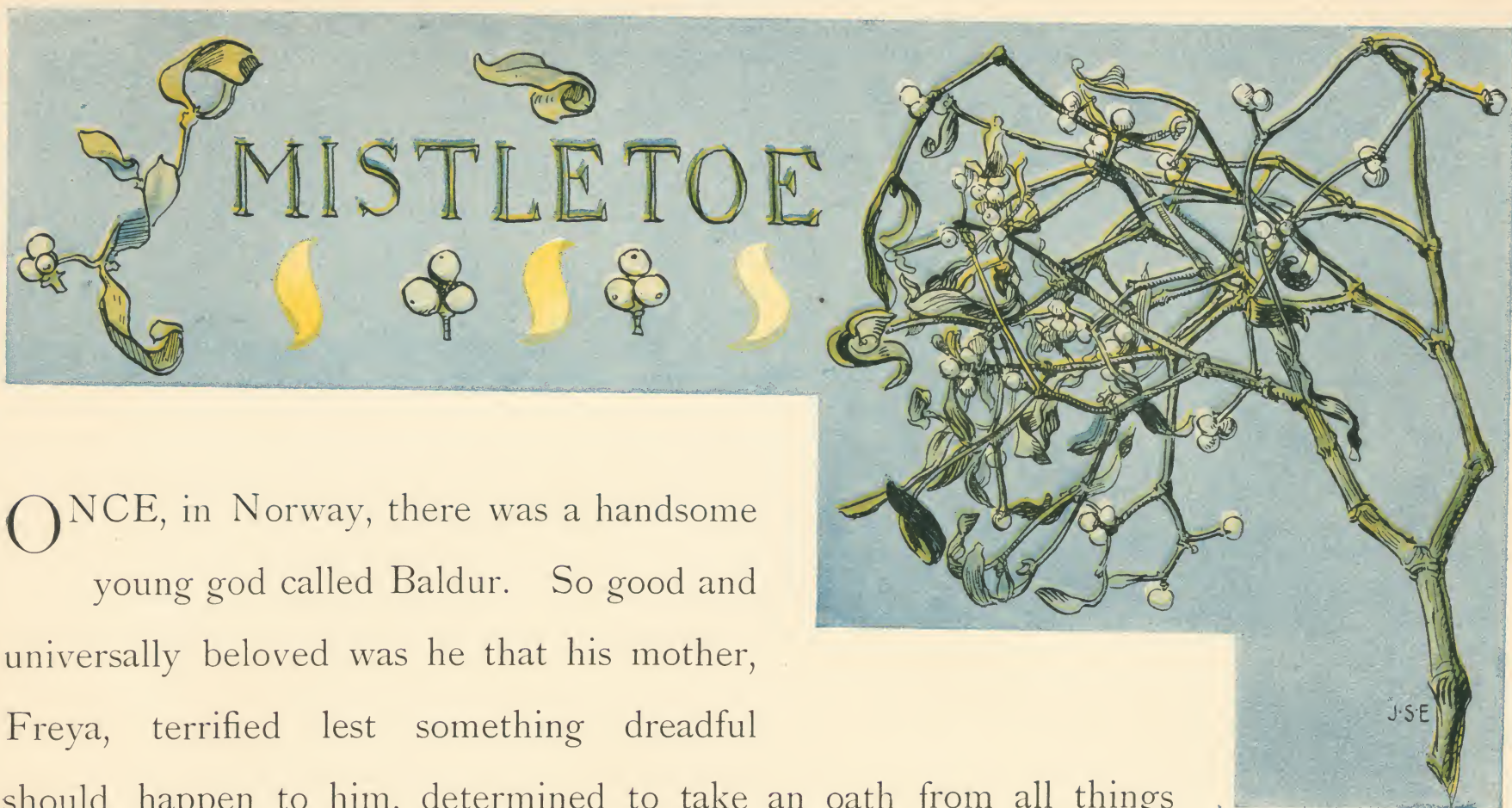


The beech tree showered thousands of prickly nuts on him for his pains; the elm tree nearly blew him off the earth at such an insulting question, and the fir tree pelted him with cones.

At last Ganymede came to the poplar: "Dear me," answered this tree, in reply to the cupbearer's question, "How very shocking to think that any tree could do such a dreadful thing as to steal my lord Jupiter's spoons. Well, whoever it is, it is not I."

To make Ganymede believe how innocent he was, the poplar threw up all his branches to show he could not be hiding the spoons anywhere, but he had not tucked them away safe enough, and as he held up his arms, out clattered the spoons on every side.

Ganymede picked them up, and ran back to Jupiter. He told him that the poplar was not only a thief but a story-teller. Jupiter was so angry that he punished the poplar by making him hold up his branches for evermore.



ONCE, in Norway, there was a handsome young god called Baldur. So good and universally beloved was he that his mother, Freya, terrified lest something dreadful should happen to him, determined to take an oath from all things created that they would do no harm to her son. She asked fire, water, earth, iron, stones, trees, beasts, birds, insects, poisons, and diseases, and each promised it would never hurt Baldur. There was only one thing Freya passed over, and that was a bunch of mistletoe growing on an old gnarled oak, near the palace of



the gods ; it looked so soft and innocent and powerless, with its clinging green and white berries, that she thought it could harm no one.



Now there was a very bad spirit in Norway, called Loki, who was always trying to do mischief and make others unhappy. Loki hated Baldur on account of his goodness and beauty, for he himself was wicked and ugly.

One day Baldur and the other gods were playing at their favourite game ; Baldur stood as a target, and the others threw darts and stones at him, and hacked at him with swords and axes, for they knew nothing could hurt him, and they delighted to show how wonderful he was. When Loki saw this, he longed that Baldur might be hurt, and he determined to find out the secret of his safety. Then Loki changed himself into a lovely maiden, and went to the house of Freya, Baldur's mother, who received him very kindly and asked whence he came. "From the place where the gods make a target of Baldur the good without harming him," answered the false Loki.









“Ah,” said Freya, “neither metal nor wood can hurt Baldur, for all created things have promised that they will not touch him with evil.” “What,” exclaimed Loki, astonished and dismayed, “have all things sworn to spare Baldur?” “All things,” replied Freya, “except one little plant called mistletoe. I thought it so tender and feeble that I did not ask a promise from it.”

Loki smiled to himself with secret joy, and leaving Freya as quickly as he could, he flew to the oak whereon grew the fatal mistletoe, and made a sharp dart of it. Then he hurried back to where the gods were still playing their odd game. There was a blind god among them called Hodur, who was standing apart, and to him Loki went and said: “Why do you not also throw something at Baldur?” “Because I am blind, and besides, I have nothing to throw,” replied he. “Come on,” said Loki, “and do as the rest do, and show honour to Baldur by throwing this twig at him.”





So saying, Loki put the dart of mistletoe into Hodur's hand, and, directing his aim, flung it at Baldur, who, hit by the fatal plant, fell lifeless at once.

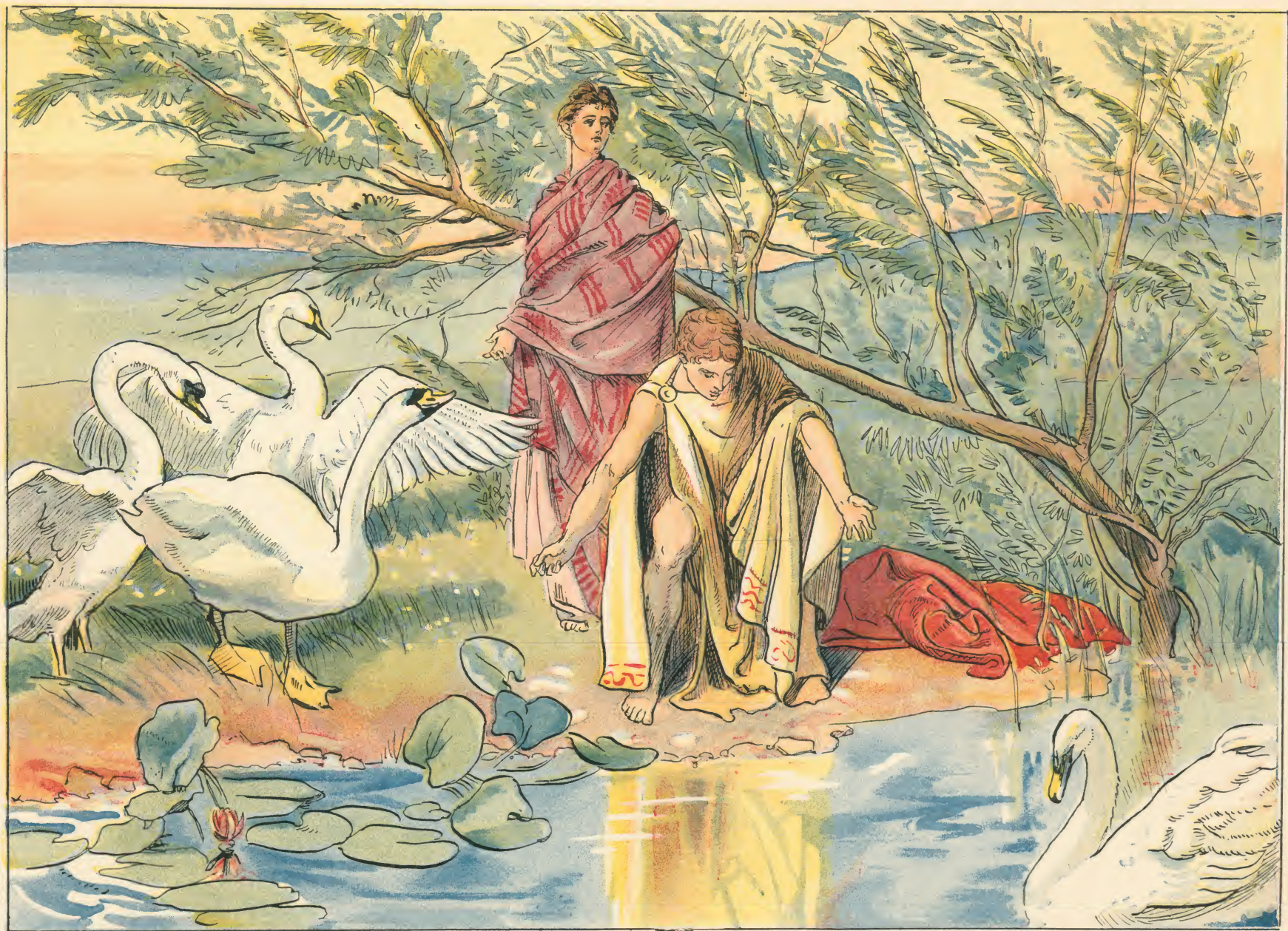
All the gods were in despair at first, for the love which they bore to Baldur, and nearly killed Loki in their rage. Then together they resolved to bring back Baldur to life; and having done this, to prevent the mistletoe ever doing so much harm again, they dedicated it to his mother Freya, and the mistletoe was made to promise never to do any evil again as long as it did not touch the earth.

That is why at Christmas, the time of joy and peace, mistletoe is hung up, and people kiss each other as they pass beneath it, for as long, they say, as it does not touch the ground, mistletoe brings happiness to those who pass under its leaves.













## NARCISSUS.

**I**N Greece long ago there lived a beautiful youth called Narcissus. At his birth it was foretold that he should live happily until he beheld his own face.

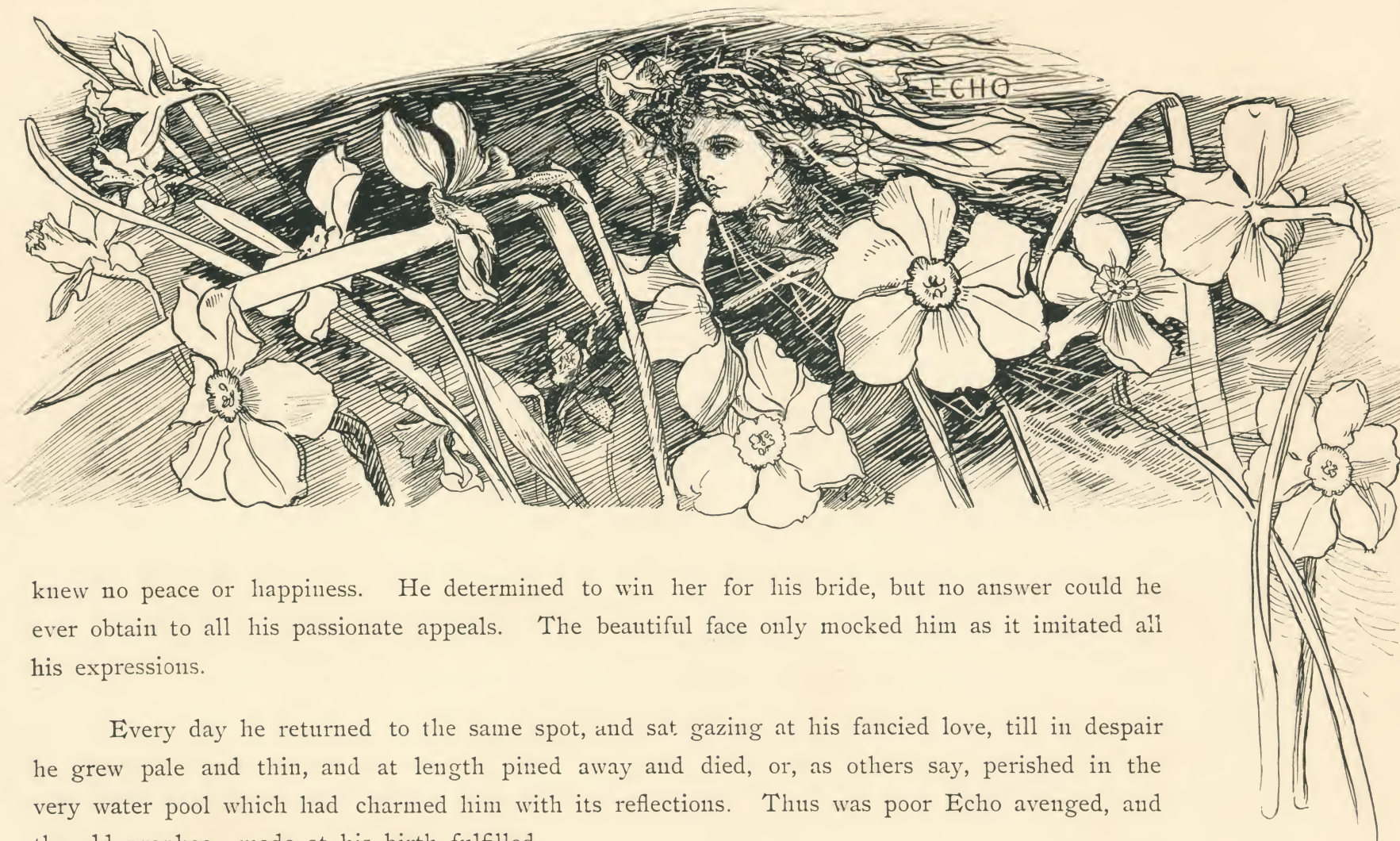
So he grew up, free from care, and light of heart, and was greatly beloved of all the lovely wood and water nymphs.

But he paid little heed to them; for Narcissus was vain, and loved no one but himself.

There was one nymph who loved him more dearly than the others, and her name was Echo. She was very lovely and graceful, and she did all in her power to win the heart of Narcissus. Alas! it was in vain; and at last poor Echo pined away till there was nothing left of her but her soft voice, that still answers from the glens and woodlands.

His vanity was the unhappy cause of this sad event, for one day Narcissus had bent over a stream to drink, and, seeing his own face reflected in the clear water, he instantly fell in love with what he imagined to be a beautiful water nymph. From that moment Narcissus





knew no peace or happiness. He determined to win her for his bride, but no answer could he ever obtain to all his passionate appeals. The beautiful face only mocked him as it imitated all his expressions.

Every day he returned to the same spot, and sat gazing at his fancied love, till in despair he grew pale and thin, and at length pined away and died, or, as others say, perished in the very water pool which had charmed him with its reflections. Thus was poor Echo avenged, and the old prophecy made at his birth fulfilled.

His name was not, however, to be forgotten, for, by the bank of the stream where he died, there sprang up the beautiful flowers that are called Narcissus to this day. And, when the nymphs came to place his body for the burning on the funeral pile they had raised, this was all they found.











# THE RED LILY



OUR Blessed Lord was walking in the Garden of Gethsemane, where there were many beautiful flowers growing, and each as He passed bowed its head in love and sympathy for Him in His hour of pain and sorrow.

But when the tall white lily saw Him coming, she said to herself: "I will hold up my face for Him to look on, and the sight of my beauty will comfort Him; and I will not bow my head like all the other foolish flowers."

So when Our Blessed Lord came to where the lily was, erect in all her proud beauty, He stopped and looked at her, and the lily was so overcome with shame at having been so vain and boastful, that she blushed crimson and hung her head, as we see her descendants in the garden now.





LILIES OF THE  
VALLEY

"LADDERS TO  
HEAVEN."













